SAFETY MESSAGE

Your Personal Safety is our #1 Priority

Confined Space Precautions

Confined Space Dangers

Special caution

Special caution must be taken when working in a closed, unventilated area. Confined spaces can be highly dangerous areas. Their hazards are often invisible, fast working, and difficult to escape. Even empty, well-cleaned spaces can pose risks.

Hard to enter and exit

Confined spaces have few or very small openings, and are difficult to enter and exit.

They are not designed to be work areas, so ventilation is usually poor.

Confined spaces can be small, like crawl spaces, bins and manholes, or large, like boilers, storage tanks, and pipelines.

Major dangers

There are four major dangers in confined space:

1. There may not be enough oxygen to breathe. Chemicals or gases may consume oxygen or displace it. Even if there is enough oxygen when you enter, it can be used up quickly just by breathing and by your work.
2. Fires and explosions can happen more easily in confined space. Cigarettes, static electricity, sparks, or heat can ignite invisible vapors and gases. Fires and explosions are dangerous in themselves. They can use up oxygen so quickly that they prevent escape.
3. Toxins in the air can harm your respiratory and nervous systems. Often, you cannot see or smell toxins; by the time you feel their effects it may be too late.
4. Physical dangers, such as entanglement from moving parts (like agitators or blenders) can suffocate or crush you. Loud noise, intense heat, and falls can also be dangerous.

Tips for safe entry and work

Identify confined spaces at your workplace and prevent accidental entry. Workers who enter must receive special training and obtain an entry permit.

Confined Space Precautions

Test the air inside	Ask a qualified worker to test the air inside for oxygen, flammability, and toxicity.
	Test at 4-foot intervals for stratified layers and in corners where gases might collect. Continuously testing while working in the confined space.
Prepare before entry	Use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including the correct respirator. Make sure all equipment is tested and grounded.
	Know the hazards that might exist in the space and how to recognize symptoms of overexposure.
Cut off gas, power, steam, and water lines	Follow the lockout/tagout procedures to protect against accidental equipment startup and to alert coworkers.
	Blind or disconnect and cap all input lines, so that no hazardous materials can enter the space.
Have a coworker outside	Have at least one trained and equipped coworker outside to rescue you in case of trouble.
	Decide how to stay in communication so that the worker knows you are okay.
Wear a lifeline	Wear a lifeline and harness in case you require assistance or rescue. Roping is not enough.
Remove potential causes of fire	Remove all potential causes of fire or explosion. Use spark-proof tools and explosion-proof fans, lights, and air movers.
Work safely	Work as safely as possible. Know how to exit the space quickly without assistance.
Removing a coworker	If a coworker must be rescued from a confined space, never go in after him or her before another trained worker arrives.
	A majority of confined-space fatalities are would-be rescuers. Instead, use rescue equipment and call trained rescuers for help.
Play it safe	Confined spaces can be dangerous areas. They don’t have to be deadly.
	Understand the risks and use safety precautions.